

# The Myth Of The Golden Age

 [infotextmanuscripts.org/wikinut/wikinut-the-myth-of-the-golden-age.html](http://infotextmanuscripts.org/wikinut/wikinut-the-myth-of-the-golden-age.html)

If you think there was a golden age sometime in the past, think again.

This list could be extended from electricity and medicine to many other things, including sanitation, plumbing, central heating, refrigeration, but by now you should get the point. True, there were good times to be had in the past, exciting times, and our ancestors were anything but dumb, they gave us the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution after all, but let us not kid ourselves that we have missed something, that were we able to turn back the clock to the Court of the Virgin Queen or Rome at its peak, we would be living some great adventure. Chances are we would die relatively young, if not as babes in arms, we would eat for the most part bland food, freeze in the winter, and live hard lives working long hours for a pittance. For such has been the lot of most of mankind throughout recorded history.

How often have you heard someone talking about the golden age of this, that or other? Al Stewart regretted that he was not born in time to see Josephine Baker dancing in a Paris cabaret, or to walk the roads of England in Merlin's Time. Others talk about the golden age of Greece, of Arab science, of Islam, and so on. At times, I've dreamed of a golden age, and indeed have lived through one of sorts. I grew up in the 1960s, and as I was just too young to participate in the Summer Of Love, I remember being there, but the 1970s and especially the early 1980s was indeed a golden age for melodic rock, heavy metal, progressive bands and singer-songwriters. If unlike me you missed the boat, you can relive it on YouTube, but let us not kid ourselves.



Henry VIII

Last Saturday night, I was beavering away on the computer as is my wont, when suddenly it went off and the lights went out, like in the whole neighbourhood. I've seen a power cut or two over the decades I've been living here, but never at night. Now here is the 64 cent question: how would you like to live in a world without electricity, period?

Curiously, when I turned on my computer the following afternoon it was showing the time as 15.10 when the real time was 14.33; the date had also advanced to Monday. When I noticed the time – on the bottom right hand corner of the screen – was different from that on my watch, I assumed the watch had stopped. It was only when I checked with the world calendar and clock that I realised it was the machine rather than the timepiece that was at fault. That is how dependent we have all become on technology. There are now over seven billion people on this planet, and the damned human species keeps breeding. If modern technology were to suddenly cease, if the flow of electricity were somehow stopped, how many of those seven billions do you think would be alive next month? Next year?

Young people growing up today can't remember a world without the Internet, or even one without the Web, how would they or any of us fair in a world in which men could travel no faster than a horse, and a conversation with someone on the other side of the ocean was to all intents and purposes impossible? And let's not talk about modern medicine. In the ancient world, appendicitis was a death sentence. Even lesser ailments that are readily treated today could be fatal or cause great problems for the victim. Henry VIII died in January 1547 aged only 55; his death was a direct result of a leg injury he sustained in 1536, which left him in constant pain for the rest of his life. The King of England had at his beck and call the best medical brains money could buy, yet to no avail. In that sense, most of the population of the Western world, Japan, China and many other countries enjoys a higher standard of living than the kings of yore.